

State policies that promote health, education, and strong families can help the early development and school readiness of America's youngest citizens. This profile highlights Arkansas's policy choices alongside other data related to the well-being of young children.

Health and Nutrition

States can support young children's development by making key policy choices in early health and development. This section of ITO highlights states' policy choices for supporting young children's wellbeing: 1) Access to and continuity of health care, including state Medicaid/CHIP eligibility levels and coverage of legal immigrant children; 2) Parents' access to health care, including for low-income pregnant women, and access to a medical home for young children; and 3) Preventive screening and assessment, including adherence to recommended schedules for well-child visits.

Early Care and Education

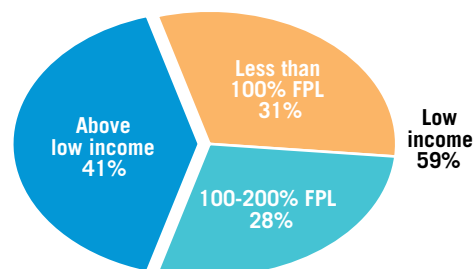
States make important decisions about the early care and education services they provide to young children and families. This section of ITO highlights states' key policy choices that affect children's development and parents' ability to work: 1) Access to childcare, including subsidy eligibility levels and reimbursement rates; and 2) States' investment in Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-kindergarten, child care centers' class size and student-teacher ratios and investment in infant/toddler specialist networks and credentials and Quality Rating Improvement Systems.

Parenting and Economic Supports

States make critical policy choices that help low-income parents effectively support young children's healthy development. This section of ITO spotlights states' policy choices related to important economic supports for low-income families with young children: 1) TANF requirements for parents of young children; and 2) Income support policies including tax relief, earned income and dependent care tax credits, as well as child support disregards.

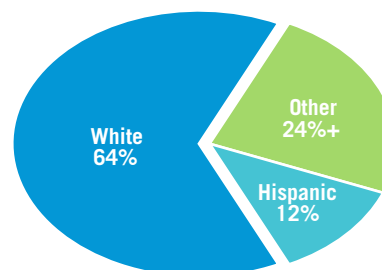
Young children (under age 6)¹: 238,373

Young children by income, 2009¹



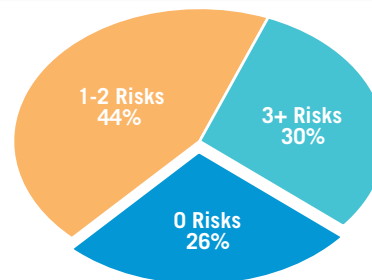
Among young low-income children, 15% live in extreme poverty (less than 50% FPL).

Young children by race/ethnicity, 2009¹



+ "Other" represents all racial/ethnic groups with very small sample sizes

Exposure to multiple risk factors* among young children, 2009²



* Risk factors include any combination of the following: single parent, living in poverty, linguistically isolated, parents have less than a high school education, and parents have no paid employment.

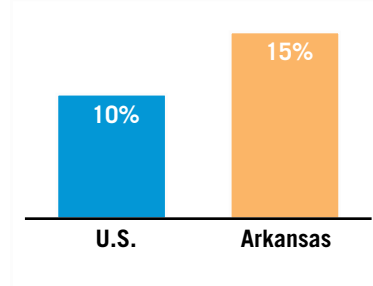
HEALTH AND NUTRITION

State Choices to Promote Access

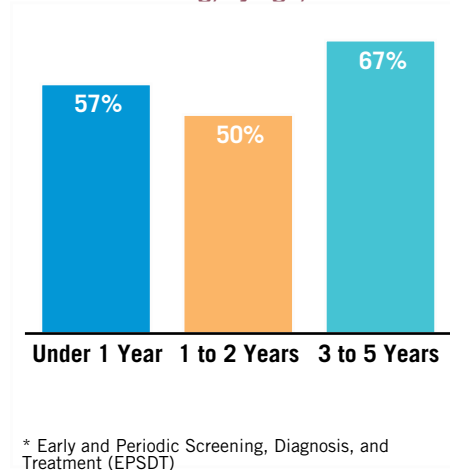
Income eligibility limit for public health insurance (Medicaid/CHIP) at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). [2010]³

- Children <1 year
State eligibility set at 200% FPL (Separate State CHIP Program)
- Children ages 1-5 years
State eligibility set at 200% FPL (Medicaid-expansion CHIP Program)
- Pregnant women
State eligibility set at 200% FPL (Medicaid-expansion CHIP program)
- Immigrant children <1 year
- Immigrant children 1-5 years
- Immigrant pregnant women
200% FPL - covers all legal and most undocumented immigrants
- Provide lawfully residing immigrant children with Medicaid/CHIP coverage without 5-year waiting period [2010]⁴
- Provide lawfully residing pregnant immigrant women with Medicaid/CHIP coverage without 5-year waiting period [2010]⁴
- Provide temporary coverage to pregnant women under Medicaid until eligibility can be formally determined. [2010]⁵
- Provide temporary coverage to children under Medicaid or CHIP until eligibility can be formally determined. [2010]³
- Include at-risk children in the definition of eligibility for IDEA Part C. [2009]⁵
- Do not require redetermination of eligibility for Medicaid/CHIP more than once a year [2010]³

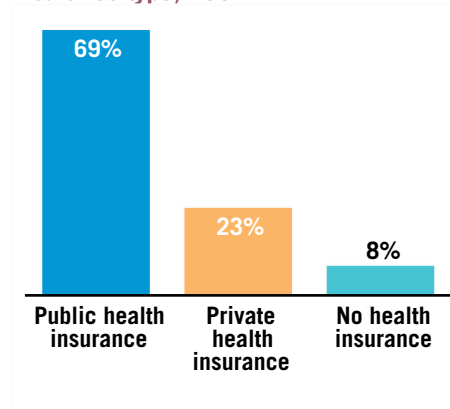
Young children who lack health insurance, 2009¹



Percent of eligible children who received at least one EPSDT* screening, by age, 2008⁶



Percent of low-income children with a medical home, by insurance type, 2007⁷



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

State Choices to Promote Quality

EPSDT screening periodicity schedule meets recommendations of American Academy of Pediatrics [FY 2009]⁸

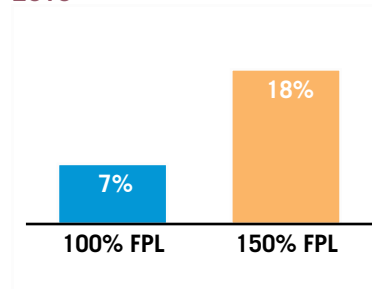
- 7 Screenings for children <1 year
State requires 5 screens. 41% of eligible screens were completed in 2009.
- 4 Screenings for children 1-2 years
State requires 4 screens. 30% of eligible screens were completed in 2009.
- 3 Screenings for children 3-5 years
State requires 3 screens. 49% of eligible screens were completed in 2009.
- Require newborn screening for the 29 metabolic deficiencies/disorders recommended by the March of Dimes [2011]⁹

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

State choices to promote access

- Set the income eligibility limit for child care subsidies at or above 200% FPL. [2010]¹⁰
A family of three is eligible up to \$28,345, or 155% FPL. This reflects no change in FPL percentage from 2009.
- Child care subsidy reimbursement rate meets the recommended 75th percentile of the market rate for two consecutive years [2010]¹¹
- Redetermine the eligibility for child care subsidies no more than once per year [2010]¹¹
- Supplement Early Head Start with state or other federal funds. [2008]¹²
- Fund a pre-kindergarten program and/or supplement Head Start. [2010]¹³
\$111,000,000 for pre-kindergarten

Monthly child care co-payment fees as a percent of income for a family of three with one child in care, 2010¹⁴



State choices to promote quality

- Require one adult for every 8 4-year-olds, and a maximum class size of 16 in child care centers. [2008]¹⁵
Child care regulations require one adult for every 15 children, and the maximum class size is 30.
- Require one adult for every four 18-month-olds, and a maximum class size of eight in child care centers. [2008]¹⁵
Child care regulations require one adult for every 9 children, and the maximum class size is 18.
- Allocate state or federal funds for a network of infant/toddler specialists that provide assistance to child care providers. [2010]¹⁶
Allocate CCDF and ARRA funds to finance ITSN.
- Have early learning standards or developmental guidelines for infants and toddlers. [2010]¹⁷
- Have an infant/toddler credential. [2010]¹⁸
Non-credit training is required to obtain a credential.
- Require through regulation that infants and toddlers in child care centers be assigned a consistent primary caregiver. [2008]¹⁵
- Have implemented a statewide Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) [2010]¹⁹

PARENTING AND ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

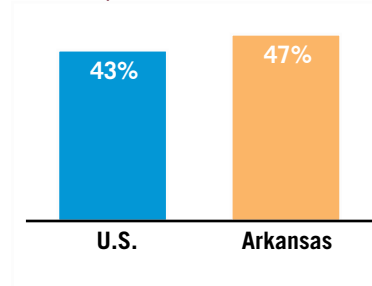
State choices to promote effective parenting

- Provide option to extend Medicaid coverage for family planning to otherwise ineligible low-income women [2011]²⁰
Eligibility based on income up to 200% FPL.
- Exempt single parents on TANF from work requirements until the youngest child reaches age 1. [2009]²¹
Parent must return to work when child is 3 months; exemption limited to 12 cumulative months during lifetime
- Reduce the TANF work requirement to 20 hours or less for single parents with children under age 6 [2009]²²
- Operate a statewide home visiting program. [2007]²³

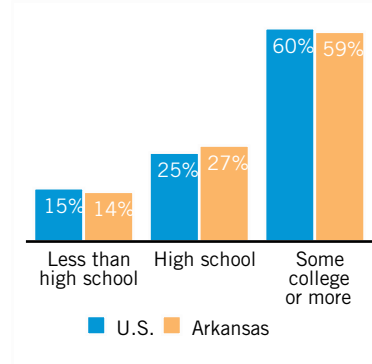
State choices to support family economic security

- Establish a state minimum wage that exceeds the federal minimum wage (\$7.25/hr). [2011]²⁴
\$6.25
- Exempt single-parent families of three below the poverty level from personal income tax. [2009]²⁵
Up to 89% FPL
- Offer a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit. [2010]²⁶
- Offer a refundable state dependent care tax credit. [2011]²⁷
A credit of 20% of the "allowed" federal "child care credit" for children under six in an "approved child care facility."
- Keep copayments for child care subsidies below 10% of family income for families of three at 150% FPL [2010]²⁸
Copayments below 10% of income at 100% FPL.
- Allow families on TANF to receive some or all of their child support payment without reducing TANF cash assistance. [2009]²⁹
- Offer exemptions and/or extensions of the TANF benefit time limit for women who are pregnant or caring for a child under age 6. [2009]²²
Exemption and extension available for: women pregnant for at least 7 months; heads of household caring for a child under 12 months of age if no child care is available

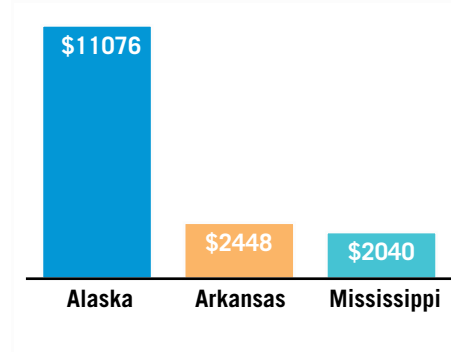
Low-income young children with a parent employed full-time, 2009¹



Education levels of mothers with young children, 2009¹



Maximum annual TANF benefit for a family of 3, 2009²²



This profile is a product of NCCP's *Improving the Odds for Young Children* initiative. It is funded through NCCP's participation in The Birth to Five Policy Alliance, sponsored by the Buffett Early Childhood Fund. The information represents the most recent 50-state data sources and will be updated with the release of new data. See www.nccp.org/improvingtheodds for other state profiles.

DATA NOTES AND SOURCES

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